



## Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy Senior Project Overview

According to the Idaho State Department of Education, "Senior Projects are required to include a written report and an oral presentation by the end of grade 12 with guidelines set at the district level."

Starting with the class of 2013, the Academy included Senior Project as a part of its graduation requirement. "Senior Project" will be denoted on the student's high school transcript with a grade of Pass (P) or Fail (F), along with the earned percentage grade. No credit will be awarded for senior project, but a student receiving a grade of "F" will not graduate with his or her class and will not participate in graduation activities. **Students earn a .5 credit upon passing Senior Project.**

### **Senior Project Basics:**

Each senior will choose a field of study in which to do his or her senior project and secure a mentor teacher to oversee the project.

- Mentor teacher request forms are available at the high school counseling office. These forms are to be submitted for approval to the requested teacher (Mentor) at the start of the school year.
- Mentors in the CCA English Department may only accept 2-3 students. Mentors in other departments may only accept 1 student. This is to allow for individualized assistance.

### **Mentor Teachers:**

Mentor teachers are responsible for guiding the student through the project to its completion. This guidance includes:

- Assisting the student in investigating and developing a worthy and appropriate topic
- Enforcing school-wide deadlines and checkpoints
- Providing grades at each grading period and reporting them to the Senior Project Coordinator
- Communicating with the senior, parents / guardians, and Senior Project Coordinator on a regular basis
- Holding regular in-person or digital conferences with the student
- Reviewing and grading content and clarity of the paper
  - Mentors will not be responsible for grading MLA Format or specific mechanical or grammatical conventions. Primary focus of the mentor's assessment will be on the essay's content (ideas, evidence, and accuracy) and general clarity (organization and syntax)
- Submitting 4-5 informed questions to the Senior Project Coordinator that might be used by the presentation night judging panel to ascertain the students' knowledge of their subjects.

## **Research Paper:**

The research paper shall be completed according to research conventions following MLA Format (margins, font, spacing, etc.). The paper shall be **no less than 2,000 words and no more than 3,500 words in length**, not including Works Cited Page and appendices. A paper that does not meet the length requirement will receive a grade of "Fail."

The research will include a **minimum of 6 sources**:

- 4 of the sources must be academic in nature, which will include:
  - Academic and/or peer reviewed published sources (scholarly articles, books, studies)
  - These sources deal with the topic in depth (not just a review or overview)
- The remainder of sources can include:
  - Primary sources (real people, research data (polls), speeches, published material from that specific time frame, audio/video recordings, etc.)
  - Magazine articles, news stories, etc.

The paper will be a scholarly work, worthy of submission in a quality college class.

**Please note that this is a thesis-driven paper! It is an argumentative essay. Students will be proving their thesis, anticipating arguments against their thesis, and defending their thesis through the integration and analysis/evaluation of evidence in their paper! This is CRITICAL to success!**

## **Presentation:**

The presentation will demonstrate command of the research topic

- **In order to participate in Presentation Night, the final draft paper must earn a passing score**
- The presentation will last **no less than ten minutes and no longer than fifteen minutes**.
- The presentation will be all about proving the thesis
- The student will implement presentation software or some other visual element, demonstrating effective use of the technology or other approaches.
- The student will field questions from CCA staff judges and include references to his or her research in answering questions.
- The audience will consist of Charter faculty members and adult community members. Parents may be invited to watch the presentation, but this is not a requirement.

## **Grading:**

The senior project grade will be determined according to the school-wide rubric. A point system will be used, with a minimum score of 70% required to receive a passing grade.

- The paper will be graded by the mentor teacher and the CCA English Department
- The presentation will be scored by the one lead judge and one auxiliary judge (CCA staff members), and one to two community members. The completed presentation score sheets will be averaged to arrive at the final score for the presentation, with community members' score sheets receiving half the value of the faculty members' sheets.
- The components of the project will be weighted as follows, to arrive at the final grade:
  - Research paper: 60%
  - Presentation: 40%

## **Procedure for Papers Not Passing**

Students who do not have a passing paper for senior project by the established grading deadline will follow these steps to address the flaws in their work, working toward the goal of passing in time for graduation:

1. Student and his/her parents will meet with an English teacher (either their existing teacher or another member of the English department faculty, if the student is enrolled in English off campus) and their senior project mentor to review the student's work and talk about what went wrong. Suggestions for revisions will be made and the student will be given a new deadline for submitting their revised paper; this deadline will likely be the Friday before Presentation night. This will be their one chance to fix the paper in time to still present with their classmates on Senior Presentation night. Students/families will be notified by the Monday before Presentation night whether or not their student will present.
2. If the English teacher determines that the paper is still not ready by the second deadline, a third deadline will be established. This deadline will be one week following the original Presentation night. If the paper is not acceptable by the third deadline, the paper does not pass and the student does not graduate. If the paper passes, a presentation will be scheduled along with an established audience, approximately two weeks after the original Presentation night.